(b) and (c) The decision to remove "Onion" from the list of essential commodities was taken as a part of the Policy evolved by the Committee comprising of some Union Ministers and Chief Ministers constituted during the Conference of Chief Ministers on "WTO and Agriculture" held on 21st May 2001. The said Committee decided to dismantle all unnecessary and redundant controls on movement and distribution, particularly to agricultural commodities, under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The proposal of the Government of Andhra Pradesh was examined and a suitable reply was sent accordingly.

(d) and (e) At present, the retail prices of onion in the country, including at Hyderabad, are relatively low and also there is no shortage of onion. Therefore, there is no proposal at present under consideration of the Government for import of onion.

Quota for rice/wheat to BPL/IRDP families

3692. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quota for rice/wheat to BPL/IRDP families has been reduced; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Deferment of taxes on sugar Industry

3693. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to waive or defer for the time being, the taxes imposed by the Central and State Governments on the sugar industry which was reeling under heavy financial burden so that sugar could be provided to consumers at an affordable price;

(b) if so, the details worked out, so far; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) At present, there is no proposal under consideration of the Central Government to defer the taxes imposed on the sugar industry. As regards the taxes imposed by the State Governments the Goverments of U.P. Uttaranchal & Karnataka has informed that there is no such proposal under their consideration. However, the Government of Bihar has informed that they have exempted the sugar Industry from the burden of taxes on purchase of sugarcane which was levied @ Rs. 1.75 per quintal. As such, the sugar industry of Bihar has got a relief of Rs. 7.98 crores in 2005-06 sugar season. This exemption will continue upto 2007-08 sugar season. No information is available in respect of remaining sugarcane producing states.

CWC godowns in A.P.

3694. SHRI S. M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is a demand that the Food Corporation of India partially use the Central Warehousing Corporation godowns in some places in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether Government have any plans to help Hamalis and others dependant on work available at Central Warehousing Corporation godowns;

(c) to what extent FCI can use these low-cost godown space of the CWC and save money; and

(d) the steps proposed to examine this matter and use them in the State particularly in Tadepalligudem area?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The CWC gets its handling and transportation work done through H&T contractors who appoint the labourers/hamalis for the unloading/loading work undertaken at CWC warehouses at the request of the depositors.

(c) and (d) Food Corporation of India has adequate storage capacity at present to meet its requirements Whenever more storage is necessitated,